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SERVING PALMER, MONSON, BRIMFIELD, HOLLAND & WALES

The Journal Register

A **TURLEY** PUBLICATION ❙ www.turley.com November 26, 2026 ❙ Vol. CLXXV, No. 44 ❙ $1.00 www.journalregister.turley.com

PALMER

Flanders named editor of The Journal Register

Turley Publications, Inc., has selected Kevin Flanders as the next editor of The Journal Register, as well as The Register newspaper serving Ludlow.

A 2010 graduate of Franklin Pierce University, Flanders began his journalism career as a freelance reporter for Turley, submitting pieces for the Sentinel and the Town Reminder.



Kevin Flanders

He also freelanced for BusinessWest and several other publications before spending the next 15 years as a staff writer for Stonebridge Press. He originally worked at the daily newspaper in Southbridge, then provided coverage for weekly papers based in Sturbridge, Spencer, and the Blackstone Valley.

"I'm thrilled to have this opportunity with Turley, which helped me launch my career after college," said Flanders, who returned to Turley this past summer as a staff writer. "I've always had a passion for community journalism and sharing stories that might not otherwise get featured. I still have a clipping from the first event I covered for Turley in 2010 – a community fundraiser in Granby."

After graduating from Longmeadow High School in 2006, Flanders earned a Marlin Fitzwater Scholarship to attend Pierce University.

"It was a huge honor to be mentored by Mr. Fitzwater and the mass communications team at Pierce," Flanders said. "Everything I learned there prepared me to jump right into the field after graduation."

In addition to his work in journalism, Flanders has also written more than 30 novels across several genres, including mystery, horror, fantasy, thriller, and young adult. He enjoys mentoring student writers and attending local author panels to help introduce others to the pathways to publication.

"Ever since I was a kid, I've always loved reading and writing," Flanders added. "My mom used to read

FLANDERS ❙ page 6

MONSON



Kim Baker packs a box with Sam Wojcik, age 7.

Turley photos by Kevin Flanders

Community mission supports those who serve

By Kevin Flanders
Editor
kflanders@turley.com

MONSON – At last week's packing event, volunteers with the Monson Military Care Package Drive completed their annual mission of supporting local servicemembers with gifts from home.

Thanks to the generosity of town residents and business owners, the project was once again a major success in 2026.

This year, 22 servicemembers from Monson – representing the Navy, Coast Guard, Army, National Guard (deployed), Marines, and Air Force – will each receive two gift boxes.

"It is truly amazing to think that a little town like Monson can send so much love and appreciation to so many different places around the world," said project organizer Karen King Turgeon.

Throughout the fall, resi-

SERVE ❙ page 8

PALMER

Suspect charged with stealing bus, guns

PALMER – On Nov. 20 at about 1:52 p.m. the Palmer Police Department was dispatched to the Big Y parking lot for a minor collision involving a PVTA bus and a vehicle, according to a press release.

The driver of the PVTA bus had exited the bus and police were dispatched. The first police unit arrived on scene and had to abruptly stop due to the PVTA bus pulling out in front of the cruiser.

The bus stopped and in that same instant, a male, later identified as the original bus driver, opened the driver's door to the bus and began to try and stop the person driving the bus.

As it turned out, the person driving the bus at the time of the officer's arrival, stole the bus and was trying to leave. This individual was immediately detained.

During subsequent investigation, he was in possession of a stolen black powder shotgun, a stolen rifle and a stolen pistol. This individual had just taken the items from a residence in Ware and was fleeing to Springfield where he intended to sell the stolen firearms.

The male identified as Joshua Carpenter is charged with the following offenses: larceny of a motor vehicle; negligent operation; license suspended, operate a motor vehicle; three counts of larceny of a firearm; two counts of firearm without a license; larceny under $1,200; ammunition without an FID card; disorderly conduct; and possession of a class B drug (crack cocaine)

Carpenter was held on a $100,000 bail and arraignment was set for Nov. 23 at Palmer District Court.

REGION

Busy weekend of holiday programs on tap

By Kevin Flanders
Editor
kflanders@turley.com

Several community events will bring families together this weekend for a seasonal celebration.

On Saturday, Nov. 28, an array of activities will take place at Light Up Palmer. Set for 3-6 p.m. at Depot Park, the event will feature face painting by Happy Face Painters; trolly rides and balloon creations; crafting with the Girl Scouts; a photo booth; and a dance performance by Tough It Up.

The tree lighting is set for 5:15-5:30 p.m.

Meanwhile, Santa will visit the PFD fire station from 3-6 p.m. Area businesses will also be open to join in the celebration.

Additional activities will be held at the Palmer Senior Center from 3-6 p.m.

The Palmer Business Partnership is thanked for running the Light Up Palmer celebration.

All local sponsors are thanked for their support of the event.

"Light Up Palmer has become one of the community's most cherished holiday traditions, bringing residents, families, and visitors together to celebrate the season," said Town Manager Brad Brothers. "It's an opportunity to reconnect with friends and neighbors, meet local businesses, and enjoy the spirit that makes Palmer such a special place to call home."

Added Brothers, "The event is made possible through the generosity of local businesses, dedicated volunteers, the Palmer Business Partnership, and, most importantly, the leadership of Chris Smith, whose tireless efforts help make this event a success year after year."

In Monson, a busy

HOLIDAY ❙ page 12

REGION

Holiday shopping season underway: Annual fair sees another large turnout



Turley photos by Kevin Flanders

Julian Nowak, left, and her mother Jackie Nowak show off their holiday spirit.

By Kevin Flanders
Editor
kflanders@turley.com

REGION – Residents from throughout the area got an early start on their seasonal shopping during the annual holiday fair held at Tantasqua Regional Technical High School.

This year's fair took place on Nov. 14, drawing thousands of guests to explore crafts made by a packed lineup of vendors.

From longtime crafters, to first-time participants, the event always features an eclectic set of offerings. Guests also enjoy seeing local students getting involved in entrepreneurship, like Hunter Addison Martin, of Wales, an owner who started her pop-up bakery business at 15.

For many local vendors who have struggled this year in a challenging economy, holiday fairs like the TRHS event are providing a much-needed boon for business. Many attendees return to the fair each year to support area artisans and growers.

Meanwhile, the event also offers an opportunity for TRHS students to connect with community members. Several student volunteers introduced guests to their clubs and service projects.

For members of the school's Interact Club, it was a thrill to raise funds in support of Birthday in a Box – a project that provides birthday party materials for local students whose families are facing financial challenges.

"Each box contains all the materials for a birthday party for 25 kids, from cake mix and candles to party hats and decorations," read a statement promoting the effort. "For elementary students, in particular, birthday parties with children in their community serve as important events in their social-emotional development."

Every box is personalized for the recipient and includes a handmade card, as well as a gift from the Interact Club.

Birthday boxes also contain food gift cards, which further assist families in need.

TRHS Interact Club advisor Amy Willard congratulates students on their fundraising efforts for the project. Community members are thanked for supporting Birthday in a Box.

Founded in 2024, the Interact Club is a partner of the Sturbridge Rotary Club.

Members of the school's National Honor Society are also thanked for their hard work in volunteering at the event. Several students joined advisor Martha Sullivan in running a baked goods table.

FAIR ❙ page 7

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SPORTS

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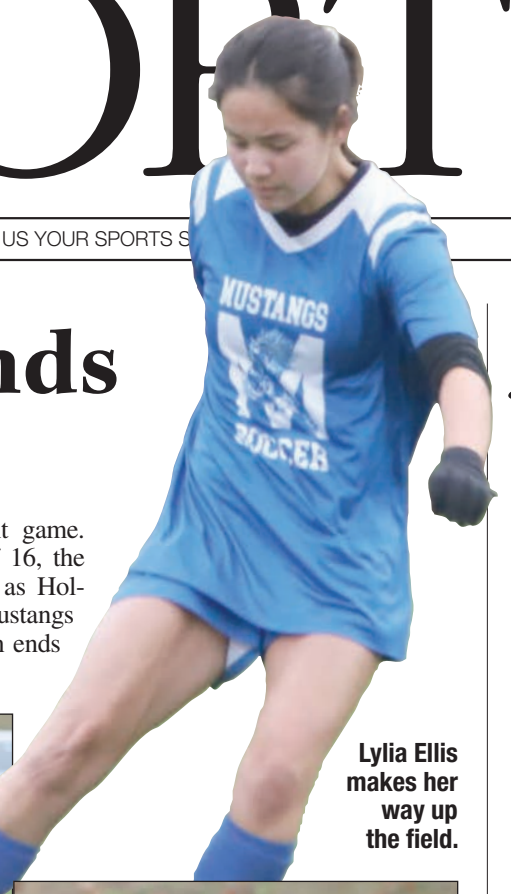
SOCCER

Lady Mustangs run ends against Holbrook

MONSON – On Thursday, Nov. 12, Monson High School girls soccer saw their playoff run come to an end. The Mustangs, which won just two games in the regular season but received high seeds in the Western Mass. and state tournaments due to a very high strength of schedule, went on a four-game win streak, winning Western Mass. plus their first state tournament game. But in the Round of 16, the run came to an end as Holbrook defeated the Mustangs 1-0. Monson's season ends at 6-15 overall.



Lylia Ellis makes her way up the field.



The Mustangs try to advance play up the field.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli



Jordyn Szado plays the ball off her leg.



Lucy Maziarz moves the ball away from the sideline.



Mackayla St. George attempts to stop a ball on defense.



Chelsea Hull dribbles away from the corner.

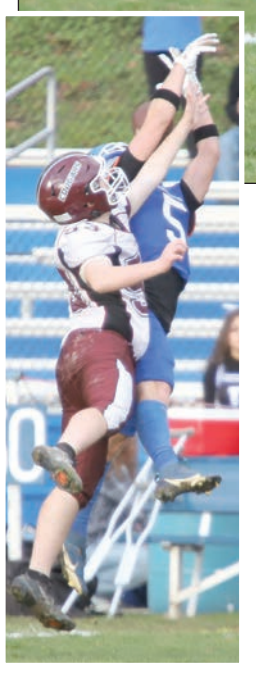
FOOTBALL

JV works program back into shape

This season, Palmer High School football took a step back to the age of most of the players on the team. For the first time in years, Palmer only had a football team doing a junior varsity schedule. This was decided earlier this year due to the overwhelming number of young players involved in the sport. School officials felt it was not safe to put the young players up against established varsity players, especially those with many upper classmen.

Palmer concluded its JV season on Nov. 9 against Ludlow.









Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli



The Pioneers run a rushing play.

FOOTBALL

Offense struggles in vocational tournament

FRAMINGHAM – After a nonplayoff win in Week 9, the Pathfinder Tech football team was in the semifinals of the state vocational tournament featuring smaller schools.

Pathfinder battled Keefe Tech at Framingham State on Friday, Nov. 13, falling 41-7 in the matchup. Keefe Tech moved to the championship game.

It was the second straight year Pathfinder participated in the vocational tournament. Pathfinder entered their Thanksgiving matchup with Belchertown with an overall record of 6-4.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

A pair of Pioneers go for a tackle.



Grayson Griswold takes the snap.

Peyton Kularski makes a block on the line.



Terynce Senquiz makes a block for the defense.